

March 2018

THE



NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the first ASTRA newsletter! First, I would like to say a great big “thank you” to all of our ASTRA club supervisors for supporting our ASTRA program. I hope you

know how much Altrusa and your ASTRA members appreciate the work you do to support young people grow in leadership and service. It is great to see our International ASTRA committee working so hard on so many initiatives that will help make sponsoring an ASTRA club easier and make being an ASTRA member even more attractive. April and her team I know are there for you to support you in any way that you need. Remember also that the team at the International Office are there to help too. We have exciting news about our Altrusa website – we have a special task force working on a complete overhaul of this site (new host and platform) and we will have a public access ASTRA section

up and running in the next few months. Work will also be taking place on creating a “behind the wall” section where ASTRA information can be held. I know that April and her team and the website task force team will be working hard on ensuring that we provide usable tools and information for you. We are working really hard at the International level to open up the lines of communication throughout our organization and I know that April and her team would appreciate any feedback/ideas that you have on improving ASTRA and the services we provide. We are currently working on a new “Suggestions Box” on the member section of our International Website so this could be an ideal place for you to go online and pop your ideas in. I look forward to hearing more about ASTRA and what you are all doing in the coming months.

Leanne Milligan
International President 2017-2019



ASTRA IS GROWING AND EVOLVING!

April Smith, International ASTRA Chair

Just like our young ASTRA members we need to grow, mature and learn how to make our ASTRA programs more effective and current. The International ASTRA Committee has been focusing on ways to make the ASTRA experience even better and more successful for ASTRA members as well as all our dedicated Altrusa members who put in countless hours as ASTRA Chairs, advisors and mentors. Our main priority this year has been communication. We are trying to let everyone who is involved with ASTRA know that we want to hear from you on what your clubs are doing and what things may need to be changed or updated at the International level. We also want you to hear from us on what we have been working on, let you know that we are listening to your needs and keep you up to date on any changes. We can't do this without your feedback.

This newsletter is one step in our goal of communication. In the next few paragraphs I will share with you some of the things we have been working on and then you will be able to read articles from other ASTRA committee members, including changes that have been made to this year's scholarship process and the collection of Service Project ideas.

ASTRA Service Club Award

We are working on making recommendation to the International Board to reinstate the ASTRA Service Club Award as a way for our clubs to showcase one of their important service projects and not just randomly choose a few winning clubs. We didn't have enough time for the 2018 District Conferences to finalize the criteria and the details needed to submit projects and then the guidelines for judging. We are preparing to have things approved and in place for 2019.

For those of you who remember the previous ASTRA Club Service Awards about 6 or 7 years ago, this award was handled similarly to the other awards presented at the District Conference. The winners were forwarded on to International to be judged and awards given at Convention. The most recent Service Club Awards were based on submitting an End of Year Activity Report and then randomly chosen with the luck of a draw.

We will provide all the information on this in plenty of time for planning and preparing your ASTRA Clubs to participate in 2019.

End of Year Activity Report

As mentioned above the ASTRA Club Service Award was based on criteria provided on this report. We are working on revising this report and make it more of a data gathering tool. We are also recommending it not be due until May 31st of each year, which will coincide

with the end of the academic year in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

However, for this year we will continue to use the current End of Year Activity Report and choose the ASTRA Club Service Awards the same as the past years. Be sure to get your report in by April 1st for your ASTRA Clubs to be eligible to be entered in the drawing. The committee would like to announce the winners in time to for the District Conferences.

Graduation Cords

Once again you can order graduation cords, at no charge, for your high school and college ASTRA Club members who are in good standing and are graduating this year. Please contact the International office with how many you will need and where you want them sent. Also, as in the past if you send a list of names and address of all the graduates our International President, Leanne Milligan will be happy to send them a letter of congratulations.

It has been discussed and the ASTRA Committee has done some research on changing the color of the graduation cords. For this year they will remain the burgundy and silver but we would like your feedback when you order your cords as to whether you would like to continue with this color or change to a different color. The committee is recommending a turquoise (teal) color that would be more in line with our own Altrusa colors. We are also exploring the option of offering the two different choices if some of your clubs would rather stay with the current colors. Once again this is where we really need your feedback.



Policy 4 ASTRA

Included in this newsletter is the new Policy 4 language and I encourage you to review it and note some of the changes. However, for this year, we will still ask you to send in the current End of Year Activity Report by April 1st as mentioned above.

ASTRA Survey

Hopefully you got a chance to complete the ASTRA Survey that was sent out a few months ago. This was an effective way for us to collect current information on ASTRA Clubs throughout International. We are still trying to fill in some gaps and complete some missing information. If you didn't get a chance to complete the survey please contact the International office so you can provide them the information needed. Recently the data that had been collected indicated we now have 86 ASTRA Clubs throughout International with over 3,114 ASTRA members. I know some updates have been made since I received this information and hopefully by the time we put out the next ASTRA Newsletter we will have more accurate data.

Parents of ASTRA Club Members

I would like to share a quick story about ASTRA and Altrusa membership. Our ultimate goal with our ASTRA members is to eventually have them become an Altrusan. However, many of these young people will be too busy getting through college, pursuing careers and starting families to join immediately after high school or college. I am a strong believer that if we get their parents involved and have them become Altrusans they will be able to maintain the connection and eventually be future members of our organization.

With that in mind at the beginning of this last school year my own Altrusa Club of Cinco Ciudades in Central California held a Membership Event and we invited our ASTRA Club members from Lopez High School to come on the Sunday afternoon of the event to help us with set up and serving. We also told the ASTRA members to invite their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. A couple of the parents did attend and one sat at my table. Her daughter was new to the club this year so she wasn't too familiar yet with the group. She was so impressed with our club and our projects she immediately filled out a membership application and I was happy to sponsor her when she became an Altrusan. It was that easy! I'm not saying it will always work that way but this is just one more opportunity to attract members.

In Closing I just want to reemphasize that Communication is a two-way process and I believe in the quote "we have only one mouth but two ears." Obviously, the point is we should be listening twice as much as talking. We want to hear from you, so please don't hesitate to share your thoughts, opinions, comments and feedback with our International ASTRA Committee. Each of our committee members is a liaison to both their own District ASTRA but they have each added one or two more Districts to represent. I have listed our committee members and Districts below. You can also, always reach us at ASTRA@altursa.org or through the International office.

Committee Members & Liaison Districts

April Smith, Chair	District Eleven, California, aprilboat@gmail.com	District Two
Sylvia Juarbe, Vice Chair	District Fourteen, Puerto Rico, sylviajuarbe@yahoo.com	District One & Three
Ronda Blakley	District Eight, Missouri, rondab@cx.macc.edu	District Five
Pam Hayes	District Fifteen, New Zealand, pamela.hayes@extra.co.nz	District Six & Seven
Debbie McBee	District Twelve, Oregon, mmcbeed@aol.com	District Ten
Julie Ruiz	District Nine, Texas, julie_ruiz@yahoo.com	District Four

WE ARE READY FOR THIS YEAR'S ASTRA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS!

Sylvia E. Juarbe, International ASTRA Vice Chair

The ASTRA International Committee has been working on some improvements to the scholarship application. The idea is to give more members the opportunity to apply.

The modifications have been made to the Instructions side: changing the number of members of the judge – awards committee; including the address where you can find the application and where to send it; and sending out notifications of the winners to the members District and Sponsoring Club. To the Application side: we addressed the concern about the points awarded; changed some of the items or questions and their points; and eliminated one of the references required, leaving it to only three (3).



So, ASTRA Advisors please be on the lookout for these changes so that the members can be well oriented.

Altrusa International Foundation wants to support ASTRA members who have grown in service and this is a great opportunity for those who are graduating from high school to apply.

We are hoping by 2019 we will have this application process set up electronically so that applicants can fill out and submit their applications on-line.

Remember all entries must be received by March 15, 2018. Also, please let us know as you work with this revised application and process what you think. Is it better, can we improve on it, what comments and suggestions do you have?

[Click here for the ASTRA Scholarship Application.](#)

PLEASE SHARE YOUR ASTRA SERVICE PROJECTS WITH US!

Debbie McBee, ASTRA International Committee

Calling all Altrusa ASTRA coordinators: Our ASTRA International Committee is compiling a master list of service projects that ASTRA Clubs have completed so that it can be shared as a resource online for all ASTRA clubs around the world. We want to find out your service projects that have been big or small, local or national or international in nature, whether done this year or a favorite from several years ago! We will compile the lists that you shared into a master document that you can access in case you are trying to help your ASTRA Club come up with some new ideas for service.



Service projects will be organized into the following categories:

- Projects that benefit schools
- Projects that benefit communities--in all the various ways
- Projects done for "National (Whatever) Day"
- Projects that benefit the US military
- Projects that benefit victims of natural disasters
- Projects that benefit internationally-- foreign countries and communities abroad
- Quick projects that can be completed during an ASTRA meeting
- Projects done in conjunction with their sponsoring Altrusa club

Please email your list that includes the name of the service project and a one sentence brief description of the project, to ASTRA@altrusa.org. Send us as many ideas as you are willing to share! We would appreciate receiving your information by May 1, 2018, but will accept updates at any time--and we will continue to update the list each year with new ideas that are shared. By late June, we anticipate having this list on the international website for Altrusans to access.

Thanks so much for your help! Our ASTRA members do amazing things every year! Let's share their successes and inspire others to do more as well!